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# The Historic Russian Drive for a Warm Water Port Anatomy of a Geopolitical Myth

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William C. Green

**I**T IS COMMON WISDOM THAT RUSSIA has exhibited a historic drive for warm water ports. This view is widely held in the English-speaking world and is frequently used whenever tensions are high as an explanation for Russian foreign policy and behavior. This idea persists despite the facts that no Soviet or Russian leader has ever admitted to such a drive and that extensive search of scholarly, professional, and popular literature fails to yield a single serious study that demonstrates the existence of such a Russian or Soviet imperative. Notwithstanding, assertions that Soviet or Russian politics are motivated by desire for a warm water port appear in both academic and journalistic writings, and also in the thinking and behavior of Anglo-American policymakers.

Given the pervasive hold of this belief on the Anglo-American mind, an examination of its origins, effects on policy, and validity is important for a better understanding of Russian-Western relations. Accordingly, this article begins by examining the origin of the concept in English and American geopolitical writings of the turn of the century. It also considers reasons why geopolitical explanations of Russian behavior—including the concept of a Russian drive for a warm water port—were attractive to the Anglo-American worldview of the time.

After noting the near disappearance of the warm water port thesis following the First World War, the article turns to its revival during the Second World War. As at the turn of the century, reflections of the thesis can be found in the analyses of academic strategists and in the speeches of policymakers. To this indirect evidence of the influence of the warm-water thesis upon Western behavior toward the Soviet Union and Russia, two powerful sources can be added: documentary records of the brief Nazi-Soviet alliance of 1939–1941, and

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the even more extensive records of the wartime Allied summit conferences at Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam. These records reveal that both German and Anglo-American policy were based at that time on the belief that the Soviet Union possessed an urge, one that it had inherited from Imperial Russia, for a warm water port.

In the post-war period, the notion of a Soviet drive for a warm water port again underwent a decline in the West. But with the appearance of a Soviet blue-water fleet in the 1960s and the growth of Soviet intervention in Third World crises in the 1970s, the thesis was revived yet again. Official documentary evidence for the importance of the warm-water-port thesis for Western policy towards the Soviet Union, and now Russia, is not yet available. Yet the concept appears so frequently in academic and journalist sources, as well as in the memoirs of retired policymakers, that its influence on policy can at least be inferred.

The article closes by reviewing factors, sources, and historical experiences that illustrate Russian and Soviet views on the question of ports, "warm water," and unimpeded access to the open ocean, and, on the basis of this review, questions both the validity of the thesis of a historic quest for a warm water port and the usefulness of the concept as a model for understanding past Soviet or future Russian international policy.

### The Geopoliticians

One important phenomenon in the field of international relations at the end of the nineteenth century was geopolitics—an attempt to found a science of foreign policy upon the bases of physical, economic, and cultural geography. Geopolitical thinkers, particularly in the United States and Great Britain, were obsessed with questions of maritime trade and naval power. Turning their new "science" to Russia's geopolitical position, they were struck by the degree to which this great power's access to the sea was limited by climate and geography. Historically, by the discipline's standards of reference, Russian policy should have been focused on efforts to break through these limitations.

The geopoliticians' influence was magnified by the British public's concern over the expansion of Russian influence in the Balkans, Transcaucasia, Central Asia, and the Far East. In 1877, Russia had launched a highly successful war against Turkey to liberate the Orthodox nations of the Balkans. Russian troops were halted on the outskirts of Constantinople by threats from the other powers to intervene, as they had in the Crimean War of 1854–1856.

The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 was fought not only on the Black Sea but also on an eastern front, and Russian victories there brought Russian rule to most of the Armenian lands formerly controlled by the Ottoman Empire. Shortly thereafter, Russian troops led by the talented and wildly popular General Mikhail Skobelev established Imperial Russian rule over the major khanates and emirates of Central Asia. Eventually Russian influence began to be felt as far

## 82 Naval War College Review

south as Persia. Also, the Trans-Siberian Railroad, a Russian project launched in 1891 to tie the country together and develop Siberia, rapidly led to an expansion of Russian commerce and interests in Manchuria. These Russian initiatives, taken together, were seen in an ominous light by influential sectors of the British public.

A second factor in the wide dissemination of geopolitical views of Russia in the English-speaking world during the late nineteenth century arose from British fears for India. British thinkers were increasingly aware of the fragility of their position in the subcontinent but were unable to visualize any native movement that could dislodge them. As a result, they seem to have been unreasonably suspicious (in retrospect) about the threat posed by the only other European power with significant interests in the Middle East and Central Asia, Imperial Russia.

Fred T. Jane, a well known naval commentator of the time, commented that "Russians say—if they colonized the North Pole the British Government would lodge a protest to the effect that British trade interests were threatened."<sup>1</sup> A well known music hall song of the time (one that gave the word "jingoism" to the English language) catches the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century British attitude toward Russia:

We don't want to fight, but by jingo if we do,  
We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too,  
We fought the Bear before, and while we're Britons true,  
The Russians shall not have Constantinople.

Sir Valentine Chirol, a turn-of-the-century correspondent for a number of prominent British newspapers and journals, made a suggestive reference in an article in the London *Times* that illustrates how a Briton could use even a known forgery, the so-called "Testament of Peter the Great," to characterize Russian intentions: "Peter the Great's celebrated will is doubtless an apocryphal document, but it can nevertheless hardly be denied that in it are to be found the germs of the Asiatic policy which his successors on the Russian throne have more or less deliberately pursued down to the present day."<sup>2</sup>

British statesmen of the day foresaw that serious impairment of their interests could arise from a Russian port on the Persian Gulf or Arabian Sea. Chirol drove the point home in a later essay for the *Times* in which he cited the precedent of the Russian colonization of Manchuria following its acquisition of Port Arthur and its construction of the Manchurian Railroad to connect with the Trans-Siberian Railroad. In travels through Persia, Chirol saw everywhere signs of Russian commercial and military penetration. He viewed the establishment on the Arabian Sea of a Russian port, complete with rail lines connecting it with metropolitan Russia, as the future culmination of a process that could challenge

British rule in India.<sup>3</sup>

Rear Admiral A.T. Mahan, the foremost American geopolitical thinker at the start of the twentieth century, also used the "rumored will of Peter the Great" in analysis of Russian national intentions.<sup>4</sup> He was inclined, however, to discount any deliberate policy towards geopolitical expansion on the part of Russia's leaders. Instead, he saw Russian extraterritorial maneuvering as "simply reflect[ing] the universal consciousness of her evident needs and consequent restlessness."<sup>5</sup>

With his maritime orientation, it is not surprising that Mahan perceived a warm water port as an "evident need" for Russia. Like his British contemporaries, he saw such a port as entailing the colonization of Persia, since "it can in no way be considered adequate to Russia's ambitions unless it carries with it extensive and consecutive territorial possession, from her present southern limits in East Turkestan to the borders of the gulf."<sup>6</sup> Mahan's later correspondence indicates that he may have adopted the term "warm water port" from the English geopolitician H.J. Mackinder, because prior to 1904 Mahan seems to have used the term "unfrozen waters" when discussing this concept.<sup>7</sup>

The purported Russian quest for a warm water port had a marked if not always definable effect on Western policy towards Imperial Russia. As far back as the 1890s, as Chirol later noted, Arthur Balfour, the famous foreign minister and prime minister, had "admitted the reasonableness of Russia's desire for a warm-water port as an outlet for her great Siberian railway. He assuredly never contemplated the creation of a naval and military stronghold at Port Arthur as the terminus of an entirely new line of railway dominating Manchuria."<sup>8</sup> The Russian fortification of Port Arthur occasioned such alarm that it was a factor in leading Great Britain to abandon her policy of nonalignment and sign her first treaty of military alliance in a half-century—in 1902, with Japan.

Another indicator of the influence that the warm-water concept may have had on Western policy is the prominence in American public life of its adherents, such as Isaiah Bowman, an eminent geopolitician who also had a prominent public policy career that would include service as one of Woodrow Wilson's advisors in negotiations for the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>9</sup> His acceptance of the concept is evidenced by his use of it in his academic writing.

The "Testament of Peter the Great" deserves closer examination, given its use by pre-World War I geopoliticians to support assertions that Imperial Russia was gripped in a historic drive for a warm water port. As will be shown, not only was it used in this manner at the turn of the century, but it continued to be as late as the 1980s. This "Testament" is a crude forgery that appeared in France on the eve of Napoleon's invasion of Russia; it is reprinted at the end of this article. The document is generally felt to have been launched by some agency of the French government as a disinformation effort aimed at building support for the diplomatic campaign against Russia.<sup>10</sup> There is, however, some question as to

## 84 Naval War College Review

whether originally it might not have been a private forgery drawn upon by Napoleon's subordinates as part of their propaganda effort in the war.<sup>11</sup>

Regardless of its origins, the "Testament" was used widely by Napoleon and his government to malign the motives of Tsar Alexander I. Despite the fact that internal evidence alone reveals it to be fraudulent (for example, it locates the port of Arkhangel'sk on the Baltic rather than on the Barents Sea), it surfaced frequently over the next century. It was reprinted in English during both the Crimean War and the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878. Hitler circulated it widely during the Second World War, and well into the 1950s the Soviet government took pains to emphasize its falsity.<sup>12</sup>

In sum, the Anglo-American geopoliticians of the turn of the century appear to have formulated the concept of a historic Russian drive for a warm water port by "mirror-imaging" upon Imperial Russia their own concerns with trade and sea power. In doing so, they were recognizing the real limitations placed on Russian naval and commercial shipping by geography and climate. Indeed, numerous efforts by Russia to circumvent such limits may be cited (and will be, below). The geopoliticians were also reacting to actual Russian moves in the Balkans, Transcaucasia, Central Asia, and the Far East, as well as to less rational British fears for India. But their reasoning was entirely deductive, in that it assumed the basic truth at issue. Their inability to find any Russian source to confirm their geopolitical inference of a historic drive for a warm water port led some of them to use a document, Peter the Great's supposed will, that they themselves openly admitted was fraudulent.

### The Second World War

With the entry of Russia into the First World War and throughout the inter-war years, the concept of a historic Russian drive for a warm water port essentially disappeared from Anglo-American political writings. The Russian Civil War left the old empire's successor state with diminished territory, resources, and naval force. Despite its ideological pretensions, the Soviet Union manifested no geopolitical threat to Anglo-American maritime superiority.

But the concept revived during the Second World War. It is frequently found in British and American writings from the period. Moreover, it had a number of direct and documentable effects on Anglo-American policy toward the Soviet Union during the war and also in the post-war settlement hammered out in the Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam conferences. Interestingly enough, it also had a significant effect on *German* policy toward the Soviet Union, under the short-lived Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939–1941.

In the English-speaking world the concept reappeared, as might be expected, in the writings of many wartime and immediate post-war analysts attempting to gauge the motivations of Stalin's foreign policy. Moscow had not been a major factor in world politics since the 1917 Revolution; suddenly the Soviet Union

had emerged from relative isolation and obscurity to become a key player in two global alliances successively, first the Axis and then its opposition. International relations specialists, not accustomed to Soviet behavior, naturally returned to explanations produced a generation earlier explaining the policy of the Russian Empire.

Examples can be readily produced, such as the assessment of George B. Cressey, chairman of the geology and geography department at Syracuse University: "Free access to the sea is an indispensable requisite for modern nations, so that the quest for an ice-free port is an inevitable part of Russia's foreign policy. . . . In one form or another, this search for ice-free ports is an inescapable element in foreign policy. None of the conceivable routes offer much satisfaction. A path across Finland and Norway is topographically uninviting, the possession of Istanbul would not guarantee access to the Atlantic, the Persian Gulf is far off center, and the reoccupation of Manchuria or Mongolia and North China is hardly feasible. The Russian Bear can scarcely expect to find warm water, even though he may be entitled to it."<sup>13</sup> Robert J. Kerner, professor of history at the University of California at Berkeley, concluded that "when the Muscovite state was landlocked, they helped to create the Russian drive to the sea—a centuries old national longing—because its independence and security depended upon access to the seas."<sup>14</sup>

That the warm-water-port thesis had policy implications during the war can be inferred by the participation of its adherents in key military and civilian positions. For instance, Isaiah Bowman, cited earlier, was an advisor to President Roosevelt throughout the Second War. But the public record of the Second World War is so extensive that such inferential evidence need not be relied upon. The direct effects of the warm-water thesis can be seen in at least two major episodes of the war: Hitler's attempts at further negotiation with the Soviet Union during the period of the Nonaggression Pact, and the Anglo-American efforts to reach agreement with the Soviet Union on territorial settlements in the major wartime conferences.

***The Nonaggression Pact.*** Ironically, Germany had been introduced to the Anglo-American concept of a Soviet drive for a warm water port during the 1920s and 1930s, a time when the thesis had fallen into disuse in English-speaking nations. German perspectives on international affairs during this period were strongly molded by Anglo-American geopolitical thinking from before the First World War, as interpreted by General Karl Haushoffer, director of the Institute for the Study of Geopolitics at the University of Munich. Haushoffer felt strongly that the Soviet Union and Germany had no business fighting each other, and his many maps of the "natural" geopolitical divisions of the world always showed the Soviet Union as having maritime access to the Arabian Sea. Often his "Greater Soviet Union" even incorporated all of India.

## 86 Naval War College Review

General Haushoffer's importance in Nazi policy can be seen in his close personal ties with Deputy Reichsführer Rudolf Hess and with Adolf Hitler. Haushoffer frequently visited Hitler in prison after the failure of the Munich putsch of 1923, and his influence is clearly visible in *Mein Kampf*. Although Haushoffer advocated that the Nazis continue the close ties with the Soviet Union established by the Weimar Republic, this view always had to struggle against the anti-Jewish and anti-Slavic racism inherent in Nazi philosophy. Nevertheless, the growing antagonism between Germany on one side and Britain and France on the other briefly gave Haushoffer the opportunity to see his policies put into practice.

In 1939 Germany and the Soviet Union signed a treaty of mutual nonaggression that allowed for the partition of Poland between the two nations and the division of the rest of Eastern Europe into spheres of influence. The treaty precipitated World War II, inasmuch as upon the Nazi invasion of Poland, Britain and France declared war. In German eyes, an important role for this pact, beyond stabilization of the eastern frontier, was to keep the Soviet Union from interfering with the annexation of crucial territories in Eastern Europe and their incorporation into a "Greater Germany." This shift in Nazi policy was acclaimed by Haushoffer and his disciples.

Hitler eventually grew unhappy with the terms of his original deal with Stalin, owing to a number of factors. These included Nazi outrage at the attack upon "Aryan" Finland by the "subhuman" Slavs of the Soviet Union in the Winter War of 1939-1940, disputes with Stalin over the Soviet occupation of parts of Rumania and eastern Poland, reassessment of Soviet strength after Stalin's early setbacks in the Winter War, the shift in the continental balance of power after the fall of France in May 1940, and the impossibility of forcing England to sue for peace after the Luftwaffe's defeat in the Battle of Britain. Hitler hoped through threats and enticements to renegotiate the terms by which he and Stalin had divided Europe into spheres of influence.

The climactic moment was the final visit to Berlin by the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Vyacheslav Molotov, as is made clear by German foreign ministry documents published by the U.S. State Department after the war. These records show Hitler attempting to persuade the Soviet Union to disgorge territories originally assigned to it, especially in the Balkans, by offering Stalin a free hand in the south: "The Führer then reverted to the German-Russian efforts. He understood thoroughly Russia's attempts to get ice-free ports with absolutely secure access to the open sea."<sup>15</sup>

In sum, Hitler calculated that Soviet interest in a warm water port could be manipulated to distract Moscow from Eastern Europe, specifically by the offer of a presumably greater prize, direct access to the Persian Gulf. As Adam Ulam puts it, "Molotov did not claim the Persian Gulf as a Soviet sphere of influence,



in talks with Hitler—Germany suggested it in an effort to divert the Soviets from the Dardanelles."<sup>16</sup>

The lure did not work; Stalin and his deputies did not hesitate to reject this Nazi tactic. Far from being the object of a Soviet "drive," a port on the Indian Ocean was a peripheral issue that failed to distract Stalin from the strategic importance of Eastern Europe. His refusal of Germany's offer contributed to the Nazi decision to launch Operation Barbarossa, the surprise invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941.

**The Wartime Conferences.** Official records and documentation published by the U.S. State Department also reveal high-level thinking by Western leaders. The end of the Second World War saw the warm-water-port concept used by policymakers in the United States and Great Britain to assess Soviet desires in a series of important policy decisions involving post-war territorial settlements. Acting Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, Jr., reported that the return of Port Arthur to the Soviet Union was originally suggested to Stalin by the American and British at the Teheran Conference of 1943: "Roosevelt had a firm conviction that the Soviet Union should have unhampered access to a warm-water port. At Teheran, when the Prime Minister [Churchill] had said that his government believed that the Russian request for a warm-water port was legitimate, the President had suggested that the Russians might have access to the port of Dairen [now Luda] in Manchuria."<sup>17</sup>

Churchill, it should be noted, later contended that it was Stalin who brought up the issue. Yet even his depiction of the conversation in which this occurs implied that Stalin was responding to Churchill's initiative: "The conversation turned on lighter subjects, and the only part of which I have a record was the question of Russia's outlet upon the seas and oceans. I have always thought it was a wrong thing, capable of breeding disastrous quarrels, that a mighty land-mass like the Russian Empire, with its population of nearly two hundred millions, should be denied during the winter months all effective access to the broad waters." He continued, "When Marshal Stalin raised this question of warm-water ports for Russia, I said there were no obstacles. He also asked about the Dardanelles and the revision of the Treaty of Sevres. I said that I wanted to get Turkey into the war, and this was an awkward moment for raising the question. Stalin replied that the time would come later. I said I expected Russia would sail the oceans with her navy and merchant fleet and we would welcome her ships. . . . Stalin then asked what could be done for Russia in the Far East. I replied that Russia had Vladivostok, but he pointed out that the port was ice-bound, and also depended on the Straits of Tsushima. At present the only exit the Russians had was Murmansk."<sup>18</sup>

This matter was confirmed a year and a half later during the Yalta conference. The official American record makes clear that the United States raised the issue

## 88 Naval War College Review

of a warm water port for the Soviet Union at the Anglo-American pre-conference summit meeting in Malta between Roosevelt and Churchill:

### 5. Warm Water Port for Russia (Straits and Far East)

Mr. STETTINIUS said that the President had in mind the question of Russian interests in a warm water port. He enquired whether the British had any indication as to what the Russians wanted.

Mr. EDEN said that the Russians certainly wished to revise the Montreux Convention. We had told them that they should put their ideas on paper. We had no clear idea of what they had in mind but it might be that they would wish for a regime for the Straits similar to that of the Suez Canal which would enable their warships to pass from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean in time of war.

Mr. EDEN continued that the Russians would be wanting a good many things, that we had not very much to offer them, but that we required a great deal from them. He felt, therefore, that we ought to arrange to put together all the things we wanted against what we had to give.<sup>19</sup>

During the Yalta Conference itself, the warm-water issue arose in negotiations between the leaders of the three Allied Powers. Under the heading "Far East: Russian Desires," the transcript states, "Following the discussion of certain military questions involved in the Far East, MARSHAL STALIN said he would like to discuss the political conditions under which the USSR would enter the war against Japan. He said he had already had a conversation on this subject with Ambassador Harriman." The minutes continue, "THE PRESIDENT said he had received a report of this conversation, and he felt there would be no difficulty whatsoever in regard to the southern half of Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands going to Russia at the end of the war. He said that in regard to a warm water port in the Far East for the Soviet Union, the Marshal recalled that they had discussed that point at Teheran. He added that he had then suggested that the Soviet Union be given the use of a warm water port at the end of the south Manchurian railroad, at possibly Dairen on the Kwantung peninsula."<sup>20</sup>

At the Potsdam Conference, the United States rationalized the Soviet Union's plans for annexation of the German city of Königsberg (former capital of East Prussia, now Kaliningrad) on the grounds that its historic quest for a warm water port could properly be fulfilled at German expense. In his memoirs, George Kennan is vitriolic in his denunciation of the "casualness and frivolity in which these decisions were made, the apparent indifference on the American side, then and ever since, to their real economic and other effects, and the misimpressions conveyed at the time to the American public."<sup>21</sup>

Kennan's further comments on this subject are worth reproducing at length. He argued, "Let us take just the case of the city of Königsberg. Why, in the first place, it was found necessary to stress specifically in the Potsdam communiqué the cession of this city to the Soviet Union, when it had already been made clear, in the description given of the new border, that Königsberg fell within the

boundaries of the Soviet Union, is not apparent. But beyond this, one wonders why it was necessary for the American negotiators to accept without question the inaccurate and even nonsensical statements with which Stalin supported his demand for the city, and to connive at relaying these absurdities to the American public." He continued, "According to the records of the conference, Stalin, repeating what had already been said at Teheran, 'complained that all ports of the Baltic freeze. They froze for shorter or for longer periods but they froze. . . . It was necessary [for Russia, that is] to have at least one ice-free port at the expense of Germany.'"

Kennan concluded, "This statement, implying that Russia needed Königsberg as an ice-free port, made no sense whatsoever. Russia already possessed on the Baltic Sea (assuming that one was prepared to concede the legitimacy of her possession of the Baltic countries, and no one, at Potsdam, seemed disposed seriously to challenge it) three perfectly good ports that were substantially ice-free: the former Windau (now Ventspils), Libau (now Lipaja), and Baltic Port (now Baltiyskiy). Königsberg, on the other hand, lies forty-nine kilometers from the open sea, at the end of an artificial canal which is frozen several months of the year and has to be kept open, if it is to be kept open at all, by icebreakers. Königsberg is, furthermore, accessible only to moderate-sized vessels, with a draft not exceeding about twenty-five feet. In both of these respects its qualities are not materially different from those of the major port of Riga, which had already fallen to the Soviet Union through its conquest and annexation of the Baltic countries. Thus it was true neither that Russia lacked ice-free ports on the Baltic nor that Königsberg would have filled such a need had it existed. Yet Stalin's statements on this subject went unchallenged, so far as I can ascertain, at all the war-time conferences; and Mr. Truman made himself a party to the absurdity by solemnly informing the American public, in his personal report on the conference, that he had agreed to satisfy the age-old Russian yearning for an ice-free port."<sup>22</sup>

While Kennan attributes to Stalin the interjection of the warm-water claim into the discussions during the World War II summits, close examination of the published records leaves a different impression. Roosevelt and Churchill were considering how to satisfy Soviet demands for warm water ports before Stalin ever made them! It is reasonable to conclude that Stalin, scenting easy concessions and sensitized to the issue by his earlier dealings with Hitler, was reacting to their suggestions rather than making a claim about which he truly felt strongly.

In sum, there is a great difference between the use of the warm-water concept at the turn of the century and its use during the Second World War. In the earlier period, Anglo-American geopoliticians saw the Russian drive for a warm water port as a challenge aimed initially at British domination of the Indian Ocean and ultimately at its control of the sea. Accordingly, the concept was used

## 90 Naval War College Review

both in rhetoric and analysis to focus attention on the threat from Russia. By contrast, both Germany and the Anglo-American leaders in World War II attempted to use the purported Soviet interest in acquiring a warm water port to conciliate or even appease the Soviet Union. As Anthony Eden reveals in his 1945 Malta remark, to offer the Soviet Union a warm water port was part of the process of putting "together all the things we wanted against what we had to give."

### The Revival of Geopolitics

Following the Second World War, evocation of the warm-water concept among Western commentators became rare, for several reasons. The first is that the idea had become associated with what Daniel Yergin has called the "Yalta Axiom"—that is, uncharitably, finding rationalizations for appeasing a recalcitrant Soviet Union.<sup>23</sup> A second factor is that geopolitics as a means of analyzing and understanding world events had declined, partly because of its unsavory associations with Haushoffer and the Nazis, and partly because its value-neutral approach to international relations was ill-suited to the ideological conflict of the Cold War.

But more important than either of these reasons is the fact that during the 1950s the Soviet Union temporarily lost all interest in naval forces. Nikita Khrushchev's obsession with missiles and the Soviet General Staff's focus on nuclear weapons led to a major reduction of Soviet naval surface forces. As had been the case after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, circumstances did not for the moment exist that might send Western analysts to the concept of a Soviet drive for a warm water port.

By the mid-1960s, however, it was apparent in the West that the Soviet Union had embarked on a naval construction program, one that by the middle of the next decade would replace the old fleet with a larger one of new and more capable units. This sudden expansion was followed in the 1970s with a great burst of Soviet activity in Third World arenas. All this led to a rebirth in the West of geopolitical analysis. It should be emphasized that Soviet activities in Central America, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East, and particularly Afghanistan (the "pivot of Asia," according to the old geopoliticians) lent great credibility to assessments of Soviet strategy that stressed geopolitical concepts such as control of choke points, interdiction of sea lines of communication, and fighting "resource wars."

The continuous Middle Eastern and Southwest Asian crisis situation, especially the fall of Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq War, and instability in Pakistan, was a particularly important factor in the reemergence of the warm-water-port concept. For example, this assessment of Soviet military operations in Afghanistan by Yossef Bodansky, a competent and well-regarded analyst of Soviet military affairs, is typical: "Soviet expectations for southern

Afghanistan are no less important and far reaching. For Russia—both before 1917 and since—Afghanistan has always been a temporary stop on the way to the Indian subcontinent, Iran, and the warm waters; for the Soviets, the Afghan ‘revolution’ is in addition a stage in the revolutionization of the entire region.”<sup>24</sup>

Innumerable other examples of Western writers employing the warm-water-port thesis to explain Soviet motivations could be quoted here, generally in the context of specific Soviet interest in the Persian Gulf region or Afghanistan.<sup>25</sup> One of these analysts goes so far as to include a map identifying its prime candidate for a Soviet warm water port, Shah Bahar in Iran, “only” five hundred kilometers from Afghanistan.<sup>26</sup> Occasionally the Soviet drive for a warm water port appeared in the Western literature in a different context, as a rationalization for the recent growth of the Soviet navy.<sup>27</sup> This approach was often coupled with more detailed analysis concerning Soviet attempts to secure the world’s major maritime choke points.<sup>28</sup>

An interesting feature of these Western analyses was that, as a rule, they asserted the urge for a warm water port as a motive for Soviet behavior without any explanation as to how the acquisition of such a port would be in Soviet interests.<sup>29</sup> This is in sharp contrast to the previously discussed Anglo-American geopolitical analysts of the turn of the century, who generally made some effort to explain the circumstances in which they saw Russia showing interest in a warm water port.<sup>30</sup>

A typical example of these more recent analyses is one written by Martin Sicker. In a 1988 assessment of Soviet expansionism, he not only attributed the Soviet Union’s moves in the Middle East and South Asia to its drive for a warm water port but attacked those who doubted that motive. “For more than a century,” Sicker asserted, “Russian strategists have aspired to a warm water outlet into the Indian Ocean. In the late nineteenth century it was seen as a prerequisite for capturing a fair share of the trade with India and the Orient, thereby creating markets essential to the commercial and industrial development of Central Asia. This aspiration is considered by many in the West today as a cliché, as a notion that no longer has any relevance in the context of contemporary international realities. This view, however, seems to reflect an unwillingness to confront the reality of an unrelenting Soviet drive for expansion and absolute hemispheric preponderance in Eurasia as a continuing motivation of Moscow’s foreign and military policies. Breaking through the northern tier barrier [of Turkey, Iraq, and Iran] is important precisely because it will allow the Soviets to establish a presence in the Persian Gulf and Middle Eastern area, and from there to project their power throughout the hemisphere. Indeed, because the Persian Gulf area is a land bridge to Africa and the Indian Ocean basin, establishing a secure foothold there is critical to the overall improvement of the Soviet global strategic posture.”<sup>31</sup> Echoing Chirol, Sicker saw the “Testament of Peter the Great” as an enduring guide to Soviet policy. “In the late eighteenth century a document

## 92 Naval War College Review

appeared in Europe that was alleged to be the last will and testament of Peter the Great. Long known to be spurious, it was apparently intended to blacken the name of Russia for reasons that are not entirely clear. Nevertheless, among other matters, it remains a fairly prescient summarization of czarist imperial aims as well as those of the Soviet Union."<sup>32</sup>

The only Western analyst to provide an extended defense of his use of the warm-water-port thesis of Soviet expansion was Milan Hauser, at the time a Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia. In a series of articles published in the 1980s, he developed this theory to explain Soviet motives for the invasion of Afghanistan.<sup>33</sup> Hauser's work is rich in material on Russian involvement in Central Asia at the turn of the century and Soviet involvement in Afghanistan and the Middle East in the 1970s and 1980s. Yet his writings did not explore either Soviet or Imperial Russian strategic concepts and decision-making to determine the full range of their possible motivation for the actions he described. Instead, he assumed, *a priori*, that any Russian or Soviet involvement in the region was aimed at obtaining a warm water port, ending by proving his conclusion with his premise.

An interesting perspective on the prevalence of the warm-water port thesis among Western analysts was provided by Richard P. Cronin, a student of Pakistani interests in the region. In an examination of regional perceptions of Soviet aims, he concluded that few Pakistanis "subscribed to the 'warm waters' thesis except in the sense of a long-term Soviet expansionist impulse."<sup>34</sup> He noted, however, that Pakistani leaders were at pains to play upon such fears when held by Western statesmen: "For the benefit," he observed, "of Western emissaries such as Lord Carrington, then British Foreign Secretary, and Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's National Security Advisor, individual Pakistanis did stress the Soviet threat to the Arabian Sea coast through Baluchistan. The military governor of the Northwest Frontier Province, Lt. General Fazal e-Haq, reportedly told Lord Carrington that, if he were a Soviet general, he 'would take the soft underbelly of Pakistan in Baluchistan and head straight for the warm waters of the Persian Gulf' ('Pakistan: an Army That Needs Some Help,' *Time*, January 28, 1980, p. 37). These remarks, which appeared to be tailored to appeal to Western fears, probably reflected Pakistan's estimate of Soviet capabilities rather than Moscow's intentions."<sup>35</sup>

How strongly responsive were American policymakers to such appeals and to the many similar assessments produced by Western analysts? Most likely it will be several decades before the full record of memoranda and briefing books is made public; accordingly the direct impact of the warm-water thesis cannot be gauged for the late Cold War period as it can be for World War II. But statements by prominent former officials of the Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan administrations have provided inferential indications that they took the notion of a Soviet drive for a warm water port very seriously. For example, analyzing

Soviet motives for invading Afghanistan, former president Richard Nixon concluded that the "proud people of Afghanistan were crushed in the iron fist of the Soviet Union, and Russia came one country closer to achieving its goals—now within tantalizing short reach—of a warm water port on the Arabian Sea and control over the oil of the Persian Gulf."<sup>36</sup>

Henry Kissinger, describing Soviet maneuvering in the region prior to the invasion of Afghanistan, also subscribed to the warm-water-port thesis as a partial explanation of Soviet motives. He added that this view of Soviet behavior was shared by the Shah of Iran and by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, president of Pakistan.<sup>37</sup> Paul Nitze as well drew parallels between what he saw as the prerevolutionary Russian dream of a warm water port in the south, Stalin's attempts to establish Soviet influence in the Turkish straits and in Iran, and the contemporary Soviet presence in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>38</sup>

In his frankly geopolitical book *Game Plan*, Zbigniew Brzezinski referred to aspirations for ports on the Arabian Sea as an important motivation for Soviet expansionism.<sup>39</sup> A remark in an account of his service on the National Security Council staff by Michael Ledeen suggests that the Reagan administration's responses to the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq War, and other regional crises were also conditioned by the "warm-water" thesis.<sup>40</sup>

It is striking to note how sharply the use of the warm-water-port concept in the 1970s and 1980s by Anglo-Americans contrasts with that both in the "geopolitical" period at the turn of the century and during the Second World War. Far from having connotations of appeasement or reconciliation, as during World War II, more recently the concept was evoked to convey a sense of menace from the Soviet Union. But unlike the earlier geopolitical writers, who had also used the warm-water-port concept to characterize a Russian threat, in the last years of the USSR analysts did not give even superficial attention, in discussing why a drive for a warm water port might have motivated that nation, to any benefits the Soviet Union might have expected to receive thereby. Mere assertion of the existence of such a drive is all that can be found in the literature of the end of the Cold War.

### Russian and Soviet Views on the Value of Distant Ports

The concept of the Soviet Union as motivated by a historic drive for a warm water port achieved its wide circulation among Anglo-Americans for understandable reasons. There was a clear perception in the West that the Soviet Union had geographic constraints on its operations as a superpower and that, at least until Mikhail Gorbachev's accession to power, it was making efforts to overcome them. Recent use of the warm-water-port concept also reflected a perception that the Soviet Union had aspirations southward, especially in the Persian Gulf, that its navy was particularly hampered by geography, and that its commercial

## 94 Naval War College Review

shipping was badly constrained by ice. The previous imperial regime had shared all of these limitations, and so to draw historical parallels seemed reasonable.

But attributing policy motives to another nation simply because they are plausible is a hazardous practice. Generally, decision makers involved in international relations discuss their policies, perform cost-benefit analyses, and attempt to recruit domestic and overseas support. Examination of Russian and Soviet writings reveals nothing of this sort involving an imperative need for a warm water port. Undoubtedly this explains the continued use of the forged "Testament of Peter the Great" as a key to Russian behavior—no genuine document or statement can be found that so well supports its claims.

By contrast, official statements and discussions that disavow any need for ports not well integrated into the Russian hinterland are relatively common. An excellent example is the remarkable "Durnovo Memorandum," a confidential study given to Tsar Nicholas II in February 1914 by Petr Durnovo, his minister of the interior: "Russia needs neither Korea nor even Port Arthur. An outlet to the sea is undoubtedly useful, but the sea itself is, after all, not a market, but merely a road to a more advantageous delivery of goods at the consuming markets. As a matter of fact, we do not possess, and shall not for a long time possess any goods in the Far East that promise any considerable profits in exportation abroad. Nor are there any markets for the export of our products. We cannot expect a great supply of our export commodities to go to industrially and agriculturally developed America, to poor, but likewise industrial, Japan, or even to the maritime sections of China and remoter markets, where our exports would inevitably meet the competition of goods from industrially stronger rival powers. There remains the interior of China, with which our trade is carried on, chiefly overland. Consequently, an open port would aid the import of foreign merchandise more than the export of our own products."<sup>41</sup>

Durnovo went on to say that "Germany's future lies on the sea, that is, in a realm where Russia, essentially the most continental of the great powers, has no interests whatever. We have no overseas colonies, and shall probably never have them, and communication between the various parts of our empire is easier overland than by water. . . . Moreover, we should not cherish any exaggerated hopes from our occupation of the Straits. Their acquisition would be advantageous to us only as they served to close the Black Sea to others, making it an inland sea for us, safe from enemy attack." He continued, "The Straits would not give us an outlet to the open sea, however, since on the other side of them there lies a sea consisting almost wholly of territorial waters, a sea dotted with numerous islands where the British navy, for instance, would have no trouble whatever in closing to us every inlet and outlet, irrespective of the Straits. Therefore, Russia might safely welcome an arrangement which, while not turning the Straits over to our direct control, would safeguard us against a penetration of the Black Sea by an enemy fleet."



Durnovo's memorandum brings the major question behind the warm-water-port thesis clearly into focus: what is a port for? Fundamentally, any port has one or both of two roles—as a base for naval forces and as a transshipment point between the world's oceans and the interior. The problems Russia would face in establishing a commercial warm-water port would be staggering. If the USSR had built such a port on the Indian Ocean, for example, it would have been of no value unless the nation that contained it were under Soviet control, contiguous to the Soviet homeland and had good interior lines of communication thereto. If not contiguous, a third party to guarantee deliveries and the security of the communication lines would have been necessary. To make it contiguous, the USSR would have had to conduct a war of conquest, annexation, and resettlement—tasks of such magnitude that the acquisition of a port itself would be a secondary matter. This limitation has been well set out by Jan Klenburg, a Finnish naval officer: "The basic principles of sea power set forth by A.T. Mahan are still valid. There is no reason to believe that even a relatively intensive buildup of maritime vehicles could transform the picture of the Soviet Union as a land power, unless accompanied, among other things, by basic changes in her geography. These changes would have to be far more extensive than getting hold of an arctic strip of coast or an inlet to an inland sea. Thus, if one considers the issue of the Cap [North Cape] and the Straits in terms of the 'old Russian drive toward the warm seas,' it is to place it in a context of wrong dimensions."<sup>42</sup>

The cost of establishing new internal lines of communication, such as by building an extension of the Turksib railroad, would almost certainly outweigh the economic benefit a new port would bring. A non-contiguous port, or a port at the end of a lengthy and fragile communications route, would also be of problematic value as a naval base, for it would be terribly vulnerable to interdiction. This point was noted by Mr. Jane as far back as 1904, in connection with England's seizure of the Chinese commercial port of Wei-hai-Wei. "Russia herself," he wrote, "does not want the place: she prefers to have her own territory at the back of her outposts. 'Always in the mass' is the Russian watchword of imperial expansion."<sup>43</sup>

In fact, both Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union had dismal experiences with overseas bases being cut off and overrun by enemy land forces. The same would be true of bases within Russian territory but close to the borders or in otherwise insecure areas. Port Arthur, despite valiant efforts by the Imperial army and navy, was cut off and forced to surrender in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905. Vladivostok, on the edge of Russian territory, only narrowly avoided this fate by the negotiated Russian settlement of this war. In the late 1930s, the Soviet Union fought two pitched battles and many minor engagements with the Japanese in order to protect Vladivostok from this threat a second

## 96 Naval War College Review

This principle also operated closer to home. At the close of the First World War, the Russian navy was beset by disaster through the seizure of most of its Baltic and Black Sea coasts by the Central Powers. Germany used a temporary deadlock in negotiations for the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk as an excuse to annex most of Russia's Baltic coastline; the unilateral declaration of independence by Finland at this time cost Russia almost all the remainder. These losses forced Russia's new communist government to re-base the entire Baltic Fleet during the middle of the winter, an operation carried out in the famous "Ice Cruise" of 1918.<sup>44</sup> Although kept out of the enemy's hands, most fleet units were so badly damaged that they had to be laid up or scrapped. Similarly, much of Russia's Black Sea Fleet was either scuttled or seized by the Germans, its bases occupied by Germany and the Ottoman Empire.

At the conclusion of the Russo-Finnish war of 1939–1940, Stalin demanded that the Soviet Union be granted a base at Hanko, about a hundred kilometers west of Helsinki. Despite its strategic location at the mouth of the Gulf of Finland, the base was of no use to the Soviet Union during the Second World War—though Soviet forces determinedly held it, besieged by Finnish and German troops and harassed by air and artillery attack, until early 1942. At the end of the war, Stalin demanded as the price of his peace with Finland that the Soviet Union be given a base at Porkkala, just outside Helsinki. The uselessness of this base and the friction it raised with the Finns led the Soviet Union to return it shortly after Stalin's death.

At the same time, the new Soviet leadership restored Port Arthur to the Chinese. As previously noted, Port Arthur had been returned to the Soviet Union at the Potsdam Conference in July 1945, despite Nationalist Chinese objections, as part of its price for going to war with Japan. Stalin's insistence upon retaining the base even after the victory of the Chinese communists in 1949 was seen by Mao Zedong and the leadership of the People's Republic of China as insultingly uncomradely behavior.

The Soviet naval experience of the Second World War taught a disastrous lesson in the vulnerability of fleets without secure shore facilities. The Baltic Fleet was forced to re-base again and again as the Germans marched up the coast in their assault on Leningrad; ultimately it was trapped at Kronstadt as Leningrad endured its famous seven-hundred-day siege. Similarly, the Black Sea Fleet was forced to retreat across its entire operating area as first Odessa fell, and then Sevastopol' and Novorossiysk. In the process it lost most of its repair and supply facilities, enormously degrading its effectiveness. At one point it was restricted to the single harbor of Tuapse, a minor port with extremely constricted mooring space and shore support.

Post-war experiences reinforced this lesson for the Soviet Union. Its small submarine base at Valona in Albania was subjected to a surprise attack after China and Albania broke with the Soviet Union in 1960. Reportedly, there were

twelve Whisky-class submarines and a submarine tender in port at the time; the Albanians apparently sank four boats and captured four others. Similarly, in the late 1960s the Soviet navy acquired sizeable port installations in Egypt and Somalia. Their expulsion from Alexandria in 1972 and from Berbera in 1974 were examples, if less dramatic than Valona, of the same pattern—a shift in the political orientation of the host governments had left the Soviet Union no choice but withdrawal.

In the late 1970s, the expansion of Soviet naval power and presence led to the USSR's acquisition of a number of basing points in various parts of the world. The only extensive naval base among them was Cam Rahn Bay in the Republic of Vietnam. The Soviet Union did not pay for or build this facility; it was, ironically, a U.S. investment in Soviet sea power. Other Soviet "bases" tended to be little more than anchorages with rented shore facilities, such as Bizerta in Tunisia, Dhalek Island in Ethiopia, or Socotra and Aden in Yemen. Even at its peak of expansion, the Soviet Union took the lesson to heart: ports and bases not defended by strong ground and air forces and readily reinforceable are not worth a major peacetime investment.

Three other points must be made regarding the alleged historic Russian drive for a warm water port. The first is that Russia has always had a warm water port with free access to the open ocean—Murmansk. Despite its northern latitude, this port is kept ice-free year-round by the Gulf Stream. In addition, Murmansk is relatively close to St. Petersburg, Russia's second-largest city and former capital. Yet Imperial Russia, despite its alleged yearning for a warm water port, made no effort to develop Murmansk as either a commercial or military port until the First World War. Even then, it was the desperate need to circumvent the blockade of the traditional sea and land routes to Russia by the Central Powers rather than any long-term "drive" that led to the development of the port and its connection to the Russian rail network.<sup>45</sup>

Today, rail and road communications tie Murmansk firmly to the Russian hinterland. The port was a major transshipment point in the First and Second World War, and continues to handle an impressive amount of commercial cargo.

A second major point regarding the drive for a warm water port is that modern technology liberated to a great extent the Soviet Union's and now Russia's naval and merchant fleets from lengthy icebound periods. Icebreakers keep many Russian ports open year round; the Soviet Union pressed icebreaking, remote sensing, and other related technologies to such an extent that it was able to use even the fabled Northeast Passage: the Northern Sea Route today is kept open over its entire length for two to three months every year and is consistently used for the passage of commercial shipping and warships between the Barents Sea and the Pacific.<sup>46</sup> How commercially viable this route is, in the absence of major subsidies, is of course another question.

## 98 Naval War College Review

A third point relates to the coastal areas lost to Moscow's control following the independence of Ukraine and the Baltic states. Observers of Russian domestic politics are already noting demands from "national-patriotic" extremists for return of these territories, or at least uncontrolled access to the sea from them. It is not unlikely that future Russian governments could launch irredentist policies for recovery of these areas. Analysts tracking such events will do well to bear several considerations in mind.

One is that the driving force for these claims is and will be an extreme nationalist position that the proper borders of Russia are the old state boundaries of the USSR. Another is that these areas harbor sizable Russian minority populations—and in the Crimea and much of the Black Sea coast, Russians are in the majority. Finally, Russia is hampered by geography in its access to the oceans. The thrust of this essay is not that Russia has no interest in maritime access, but that the areas where geography allows Russia secure access to the sea with usable inland communications are exceptionally limited. Imperial Russia possessed all these areas—the Soviet Union had all of them except Finland. It is not unlikely that the Russian Federation will feel the urge, at some point, to reoccupy them.

### A Dangerous Geopolitical Myth

This review of the Anglo-American concept of a historic Russian drive toward the sea reveals some important points:

- It is a geopolitical concept in origin, based on Anglo-American projections of what Russian and Soviet motives and policies should be or have been, rather than a study of what they are and were.
- It has appeared in numerous reputable Anglo-American studies as a justification for or explanation of Russian/Soviet behavior.
- It has had significant policy impact, at the least in that it led German and Anglo-American policymakers to assume greater Soviet interest in acquiring warm water ports than was actually the case.
- In addition to its use in support of policies of appeasement or conciliation, evidence suggests strongly that it has been evoked to exaggerate or mis-evaluate the level or intensity of threat from the former Soviet Union in the continuing Persian Gulf, Pakistan, and Afghanistan instabilities.
- Analysis of the Soviet and Russian record shows only dismal experience with overseas bases and unwillingness to invest heavily in the construction of non-contiguous naval ports.
- Finally, even a cursory examination of the nation's economic geography shows that Russia already possesses one warm-water port, Murmansk, and that advances in icebreaker and other modern cold-weather technologies have for some time allowed extended, and even year-round, operation of ice-bound ports.

In conclusion, the claim that Russia possesses a historic drive for a warm water port must be rejected as a dangerous geopolitical myth. It leads to confusion in dealing with Russia in times of good relations and to blindness towards real strategic motives when relations are bad. It also has a negative effect on assessments of the Russian/Soviet historical record. The most important reason for rejecting the thesis of a historic Russian drive for a warm water port, however, is that it is simply not true.

Given the collapse of the Soviet Union and the nation's widespread political, ethnic, and economic disorder, Russian policy has acquired an inward focus that could last for decades. With Moscow's withdrawal from Afghanistan and dramatic reduction of its other overseas commitments, it is more than likely that the warm-water-port concept will fade from public view as it did in the 1920s and 1930s and again in the 1950s and 1960s. But clichés have long lives, and should a future Russian government initiate policies that challenge Western interests in, for instance, the Middle East, the notion of a historic Russian drive for a warm water port will probably rise again.

### **"The Testament of Peter the Great"**

1. The Russian nation must be constantly kept on a war footing. To keep the soldiers warlike and in good condition, no rest must be allowed except for the purpose of relieving the state finances, recruiting the army, or biding the favorable moment for attack.<sup>47</sup> By this means peace is made subsequent to war, and war, to peace, in the interests of the aggrandizement and increasing prosperity of Russia.

2. Every possible means must be used to invite from the most cultivated European states commanders in war and philosophers in peace, to enable the Russian nation to participate in the advantages of other countries, without losing any of its own.

3. No opportunity must be lost of taking part in the affairs and disputes of Europe, especially in those of Germany which from its vicinity is of the most direct interest to us.

4. Poland must be divided, by keeping up constant jealousies and confusion there. The authorities must be gained over with money and the assemblies corrupted so as to influence the election of the Kings. We must form a party of our own there and send Russian troops into the country; and let them sojourn there so long that they may ultimately find some pretext for remaining forever. Should the neighboring states make difficulties, we must appease them for the moment by allowing them a share of the territory, until we can safely recover what we have thus given away.

5. We must take away as much territory as possible from Sweden and contrive that she shall attack us first so as to give us a pretext for her subjugation. With this end in view we must keep Sweden in opposition to Denmark and Denmark to Sweden, and sedulously foster their mutual jealousies.

6. The consorts of the Russian princes must always be chosen from among the German princesses in order to multiply our family alliances with the Germans

## 100 Naval War College Review

and to unite our interests with theirs; and thus, by consolidating our influence in Germany to cause her to attach herself spontaneously to our policy.

7. We must be careful to keep our commercial alliance with England, for she is the power which has most need of our products for her Navy, and at the same time may be the greatest service to us in the development of our own. We must export timber and other articles in exchange for her gold, and establish permanent connections between her merchants and seamen and our own.

8. We must keep steadily extending our frontiers—northward along the Baltic and southward along the shores of the Black Sea.

9. We must progress as much as possible in the direction of Constantinople and India. He who can gain possession of these points is the real ruler of the world. With this end in view we must provoke constant quarrels, now with Turkey, now with Persia. We must establish wharves and docks in the Black Sea, and by degrees make ourselves masters of the sea as well as of the Baltic, which is a doubly important element in the success of our plan. We must hasten the downfall of Persia and push on to the Persian Gulf. If possible we must re-establish the ancient commercial intercourse with the Levant through Syria and force our way into India which is the treasurehouse of the world; once there, we can dispense with English gold.

10. Moreover, we must take pains to establish and maintain an intimate union with Austria, apparently countenancing her schemes for future aggrandizement in Germany, and all the while secretly arousing the jealousy of the minor states against her. In this way we must bring it to pass that one or the other party shall seek aid from Russia, and thus we shall exercise a sort of protection over the country which will pave the way for future supremacy.

11. We must make the House of Austria interested in the expulsion of the Turks from Europe, and we must neutralize its jealousy at the capture of Constantinople, either by preoccupying it with a war with the old European states, or by allowing it a share of the spoils which we can afterwards recover at our leisure.

12. We must collect around our House, as round a center, all the detached sections of Greeks which are scattered abroad in Hungary, Turkey, and South Poland; we must make them look to us for support, and thus by establishing beforehand a sort of ecclesiastical supremacy, we shall pave the way for universal sovereignty.

13. When Sweden is ours, Persia vanquished, Poland subjugated, Turkey conquered; when our armies are united and the Black Sea and the Baltic in the possession of our ships, then we must make separate and secret overtures, first to the Court of Versailles, and then to Vienna, to share with them the dominion of the world. If one of them accepts our propositions, which is certain to happen if their ambitions and self-interest are properly worked upon, we must make use of one to annihilate the other; this done, we have only to destroy the remaining one by finding a pretext for a quarrel, the issue of which cannot be doubtful as Russia will then be in absolute possession of the East and of the best part of Europe.

14. Should the improbable case happen of both rejecting Russia's proposition, our policy will be to set one against the other and make them tear each other to pieces. Russia must then watch for and seize the favorable moment; and pour her already assembled hosts into Germany, while two immense fleets laden with Asiatic hordes, and conveyed by armed squadrons of the Black Sea and the Baltic, set sail simultaneously from the sea of Azov and the harbour of Archangel.

# Notes

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4. A.T. Mahan, *The Problem of Asia and Its Effect Upon International Policies* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1905), p. 44.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 118-119.
7. Robert Seager and Doris D. Maguire, eds., *Letters and Papers of Alfred Thayer Mahan, Vol. III (1902-1914)* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1975), pp. 27, 99.
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10. Albert Resis, "Russophobia and the Testament of Peter the Great, 1812-1980," *Slavic Review*, Winter 1985, pp. 681-693.
11. L.R. Lewitter, "The Apocryphal Testament of Peter the Great," *Polish Review*, Summer 1966, p. 37.
12. Cf. A.Ya. Vyshinskiy and A. Lozovskiy, eds., "Petra I zaveshchaniye" [Testament of Peter the Great], *Diplomaticheskii slovar'* [Dictionary of diplomacy] (Moscow: Foreign Affairs Publishers, 1948-1950). In recent years the forgery has been revived by the Pakistani government. In the preliminary stages of researching this topic, I noticed a full-page paid political advertisement by the Government of Pakistan in *The New York Times* that mentioned the Testament of Peter the Great in adducing Soviet motives for the invasion of Afghanistan.
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## 102 Naval War College Review

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26. Gerard Chaliand and Jean-Pierre Rageau, eds., *A Strategic Atlas: Comparative Geopolitics of the World's Oceans* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), p. 94.

27. Norman Polmar, *Soviet Naval Power* (New York: Crane and Russak, 1974), p. 3.

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36. Richard M. Nixon, *The Real War* (New York: Warner Books, 1980), p.11.

37. Henry A. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982), pp. 674-677.

38. Paul H. Nitze, *Securing the Seas* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1979), p. 62.

39. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Game Plan: The Geostategic Framework for the Conduct of the U.S.-Soviet Contest* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986), pp. 53, 64.

40. Michael A. Ledeen, *Perilous Statecraft: An Insider's Report* (New York: Scribner, 1988), p. 91.

41. Petr N. Dumovo, Dumovo's Memorandum, February 1914, from *Documents of Russian History, 1914-1917*, ed. Frank Alfred Golder (New York: The Century Co., 1927), pp. 3-23.

42. Jan Klenberg, *The Cap and the Straits: Problems of Nordic Security* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Center for International Affairs Occasional Papers in International Affairs, no. 18, February 1968), p. 14.

43. Jane, p. 579.

44. Cf. "Ice Cruise of 1918," vol. 2 in William C. Green and Robert Reeves, eds., *Soviet Military Encyclopedia: An Abridged Translation* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1993).

45. This fact was first noted by Robert Bathurst, who commented, "in spite of the many assertions in the West about the Russian centuries-old drive for warm water ports with free access to the sea, there had been no effort to develop Murmansk until well into the First World War." Robert Bathurst, *Understanding the Soviet Navy: A Handbook* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1979), p. 45.

46. Cf. "Severnyy morskoy put'" [Northern sea route], *Sovetskaya voyennaya entsiklopediya*, v. 7 (Moscow: Military Publishers, 1979), pp. 292-293.

47. As translated in *Peter the Great's Last Will and Testament and Russian versus Bulgarian Atrocities* (Southsea and London, c. 1877), via L.R. Lewitter, "The Apocryphal Testament of Peter the Great," *Polish Review*, Summer 1961.